110TH CONGRESS 2D SESSION

S. 3434

To combat organized crime involving the illegal acquisition of retail goods for the purpose of selling those illegally obtained goods through physical and online retail marketplaces.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

August 1, 2008

Mr. Durbin introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on the Judiciary

A BILL

To combat organized crime involving the illegal acquisition of retail goods for the purpose of selling those illegally obtained goods through physical and online retail marketplaces.

- 1 Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-
- 2 tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,
- 3 SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.
- 4 This Act may be cited as the "Combating Organized
- 5 Retail Crime Act of 2008".
- 6 SEC. 2. FINDINGS.
- 7 Congress finds the following:

- (1) Organized retail crime involves the coordinated acquisition of large volumes of retail merchandise by theft, embezzlement, fraud, false pretenses, or other illegal means from commercial entities engaged in interstate commerce, for the purpose of selling or distributing such illegally obtained items in the stream of commerce. Organized retail crime is a growing problem nationwide that costs American companies and consumers billions of dollars annually and that has a substantial and direct effect upon interstate commerce.
 - (2) The illegal acquisition and black-market sale of merchandise by persons engaged in organized retail crime result in an estimated annual loss of hundreds of millions of dollars in sales and income tax revenues to State and local governments.
 - (3) The illegal acquisition, unsafe tampering and storage, and unregulated redistribution of consumer products such as baby formula, over-the-counter drugs, and other items by persons engaged in organized retail crime pose a health and safety hazard to consumers nationwide.
 - (4) Investigations into organized retail crime have revealed that the illegal income resulting from such crime often benefits persons and organizations

- engaged in other forms of criminal activity, such as drug trafficking and gang activity.
- 3 (5) Items obtained through organized retail
 4 crime are resold in a variety of different market5 places, including flea markets, swap meets, open-air
 6 markets, and Internet auction websites. Increasingly,
 7 persons engaged in organized retail crime use Inter8 net auction websites to resell illegally obtained items.
 9 The Internet offers such sellers a worldwide market
 10 and a degree of anonymity that physical marketplace

12 SEC. 3. OFFENSES RELATED TO ORGANIZED RETAIL CRIME.

settings do not offer.

- 13 (a) Transportation of Stolen Goods.—The first
- 14 undesignated paragraph of section 2314 of title 18,
- 15 United States Code, is amended by inserting after "more,"
- 16 the following: "or, during any 12-month period, of an ag-
- 17 gregate value of \$5,000 or more during that period,".
- 18 (b) SALE OR RECEIPT OF STOLEN GOODS.—The first
- 19 undesignated paragraph of section 2315 of title 18,
- 20 United States Code, is amended by inserting after
- 21 "\$5,000 or more," the following: "or, during any 12-
- 22 month period, of an aggregate value of \$5,000 or more
- 23 during that period,".

- 24 (c) Fraud in Connection With Access De-
- 25 VICES.—Section 1029(e)(1) of title 18, United States

- 1 Code, is amended by inserting "Universal Product Code
- 2 label," after "code,".
- 3 (d) Review and Amendment of Federal Sen-
- 4 TENCING GUIDELINES FOR OFFENSES RELATED TO OR-
- 5 GANIZED RETAIL CRIME.—
- 6 (1) Review and Amendment.—
- 7 (A) IN GENERAL.—The United States Sen-8 tencing Commission, pursuant to its authority 9 under section 994 of title 28, United States 10 Code, and in accordance with this subsection, 11 shall review and, if appropriate, amend the 12 Federal sentencing guidelines (including its pol-13 icy statements) applicable to persons convicted 14 of offenses involving organized retail crime, 15 which is the coordinated acquisition of large 16 volumes of retail merchandise by theft, embez-17 zlement, fraud, false pretenses, or other illegal 18 means from commercial entities engaged in 19 interstate commerce for the purpose of selling 20 or distributing such illegally obtained items in 21 the stream of commerce.
 - (B) Offenses.—Offenses referred to in subparagraph (A) may include offenses contained in—

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1	(i) sections 1029, 2314, and 2315 of
2	title 18, United States Code; or
3	(ii) any other relevant provision of the
4	United States Code.
5	(2) Requirements.—In carrying out the re-
6	quirements of this subsection, the United States
7	Sentencing Commission shall—
8	(A) ensure that the Federal sentencing
9	guidelines (including its policy statements) re-
10	flect—
11	(i) the serious nature and magnitude
12	of organized retail crime; and
13	(ii) the need to deter, prevent, and
14	punish offenses involving organized retail
15	crime;
16	(B) consider the extent to which the Fed-
17	eral sentencing guidelines (including its policy
18	statements) adequately address offenses involv-
19	ing organized retail crime to sufficiently deter
20	and punish such offenses;
21	(C) maintain reasonable consistency with
22	other relevant directives and sentencing guide-
23	lines;
24	(D) account for any additional aggravating
25	or mitigating circumstances that might justify

1	exceptions to the generally applicable sentencing
2	ranges; and
3	(E) consider whether to provide a sen-
4	tencing enhancement for those convicted of con-
5	duct involving organized retail crime, where
6	such conduct involves—
7	(i) a threat to public health and safe-
8	ty, including alteration of an expiration
9	date or of product ingredients;
10	(ii) theft, conversion, alteration, or re-
11	moval of a product label;
12	(iii) a second or subsequent offense;
13	or
14	(iv) the use of advanced technology to
15	acquire retail merchandise by means of
16	theft, embezzlement, fraud, false pretenses,
17	or other illegal means.
18	SEC. 4. SALES OF ILLEGALLY OBTAINED ITEMS IN PHYS-
19	ICAL OR ONLINE RETAIL MARKETPLACES.
20	(a) In General.—Chapter 113 of title 18, United
21	States Code, is amended by adding at the end the fol-
22	lowing:
23	"SEC. 2323. ONLINE RETAIL MARKETPLACES.
24	"(a) DEFINITIONS.—As used in this section, the fol-
25	lowing definitions shall apply:

1	"(1) High volume seller.—The term 'high
2	volume seller' means a user of an online retail mar-
3	ketplace who, in any continuous 12-month period
4	during the previous 24 months, has entered into—
5	"(A) multiple discrete sales or transactions
6	resulting in the accumulation of an aggregate
7	total of \$20,000 or more in gross revenues; or
8	"(B) 200 or more discrete sales or trans-
9	actions resulting in the accumulation of an ag-
10	gregate total of \$10,000 or more in gross reve-
11	nues.
12	"(2) Internet site.—The term 'Internet site
13	means a location on the Internet that is accessible
14	at a specific Internet domain name or address under
15	the Internet Protocol (or any successor protocol), or
16	that is identified by a uniform resource locator.
17	"(3) Online retail marketplace.—The
18	term 'online retail marketplace' means an Internet
19	site where users other than the operator of the
20	Internet site can enter into transactions with each
21	other for the sale or distribution of goods or serv-
22	ices, and in which—
23	"(A) such goods or services are promoted
24	through inclusion in search results displayed
25	within the Internet site;

1	"(B) the operator of the Internet site—
2	"(i) has the contractual right to su-
3	pervise the activities of users with respect
4	to such goods or services; or
5	"(ii) has a financial interest in the
6	sale of such goods or services; and
7	"(C) in any continuous 12-month period
8	during the previous 24 months, users other
9	than the operator of the Internet site collec-
10	tively have entered into—
11	"(i) multiple discrete transactions for
12	the sale of goods or services aggregating a
13	total of \$500,000 or more in gross reve-
14	nues; or
15	"(ii) 1,000 or more discrete trans-
16	actions for the sale of goods or services ag-
17	gregating a total of \$250,000 or more in
18	gross revenues.
19	"(4) OPERATOR OF AN ONLINE RETAIL MAR-
20	KETPLACE.—The term 'operator of an online retail
21	marketplace' means a person or entity that—
22	"(A) operates or controls an online retail
23	marketplace; and
24	"(B) makes the online retail marketplace
25	available for users to enter into transactions

with each other on that marketplace for the sale or distribution of goods or services.

- "(5) OPERATOR OF A PHYSICAL RETAIL MAR-KETPLACE.—The term 'operator of a physical retail marketplace' means a person or entity that rents or otherwise makes available a physical retail marketplace to transient vendors to conduct business for the sale of goods, or services related to such goods.
- "(6) Physical retail marketplace' may include a flea market, indoor or outdoor swap meet, open air market, or other similar environment, and means a venue or event in which physical space is made available not more than 4 days per week by an operator of a physical retail marketplace as a temporary place of business for transient vendors to conduct business for the sale of goods, or services related to such goods; and
 - "(A) in which in any continuous 12-month period during the preceding 24 months, there have been 10 or more days on which 5 or more transient vendors have conducted business at the venue or event; and
- "(B) does not mean and shall not apply to an event which is organized and conducted for

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the exclusive benefit of any community chest, fund, foundation, association, or corporation organized and operated for religious, educational, or charitable purposes, provided that no part of any admission fee or parking fee charged vendors or prospective purchasers, and no part of the gross receipts or net earnings from the sale or exchange of goods or services, whether in the form of a percentage of the receipts or earnings, salary, or otherwise, inures to the benefit of any private shareholder or person participating in the organization or conduct of the event.

"(7) STRUCTURING.—The term 'structuring' means to knowingly conduct, or attempt to conduct, alone, or in conjunction with or on behalf of 1 or more other persons, 1 or more transactions in currency, in any amount, in any manner, with the purpose of evading categorization as a physical retail marketplace, an online retail marketplace, or a high volume seller.

"(8) TEMPORARY PLACE OF BUSINESS.—The term 'temporary place of business' means any physical space made open to the public, including but not limited to a building, part of a building, tent or va-

1	cant lot, which is temporarily occupied by 1 or more
2	persons or entities for the purpose of making sales
3	of goods, or services related to those goods, to the
4	public. A place of business is not temporary with re-
5	spect to a person or entity if that person or entity
6	conducts business at the place and stores unsold
7	goods there when it is not open for business.
8	"(9) Transient vendor.—The term 'transient
9	vendor' means any person or entity that, in the
10	usual course of business, transports inventory,
11	stocks of goods, or similar tangible personal property
12	to a temporary place of business for the purpose of
13	entering into transactions for the sale of such prop-
14	erty.
15	"(10) User.—The term 'user' means a person
16	or entity that accesses an online retail marketplace
17	for the purpose of entering into transactions for the
18	sale or distribution of goods or services.
19	"(11) Valid physical postal address.—The
20	term 'valid physical postal address' means—
21	"(A) a current street address, including
22	the city, State, and Zip code;
23	"(B) a Post Office box that has been reg-
24	istered with the United States Postal Service;

or

1	"(C) a private mailbox that has been reg-
2	istered with a commercial mail receiving agency
3	that is established pursuant to United States
4	Postal Service regulations.
5	"(b) Safeguards Against Sales of Illegally-
6	OBTAINED ITEMS.—
7	"(1) Duties of operators of physical re-
8	TAIL MARKETPLACES AND ONLINE RETAIL MARKET-
9	PLACES TO CONDUCT ACCOUNT REVIEWS AND FILE
10	SUSPICIOUS ACTIVITY REPORTS.—In the event that
11	an operator of a physical or online retail market-
12	place is presented with documentary evidence show-
13	ing that a transient vendor of the physical retail
14	marketplace, a user of the online retail marketplace,
15	or a director, officer, employee, or agent of such
16	transient vendor or user, has used or is using the re-
17	tail marketplace to sell or distribute items that were
18	stolen, embezzled, or obtained by fraud, false pre-
19	tenses or other illegal means, or has engaged in or
20	is engaging in structuring, the operator shall—
21	"(A) not later than 15 days after receiving
22	such evidence—
23	"(i) file a suspicious activity report
24	with the Attorney General of the United
25	States; and

1	"(ii) not later than 5 days after filing
2	the report, notify any person or entity that
3	presented the documentary evidence that
4	the operator filed the report; and
5	"(B)(i) initiate a review of the account of
6	such transient vendor or user for evidence of il-
7	legal activity; and
8	"(ii) as soon as possible, but not later than
9	45 days after receiving such evidence—
10	"(I) complete this review; and
11	"(II) submit the results of such ac-
12	count review to the Attorney General.
13	"(2) Duties of operators of physical re-
14	TAIL MARKETPLACES AND ONLINE RETAIL MARKET-
15	PLACES TO TERMINATE SALES ACTIVITY.—
16	"(A) IN GENERAL.—If an operator of a
17	physical retail marketplace or an online retail
18	marketplace reasonably determines that, based
19	on the documentary evidence presented to it or
20	the account review conducted by it under para-
21	graph (1), there is clear and convincing evi-
22	dence that a transient vendor of the physical re-
23	tail marketplace, a user of the online retail
24	marketplace, or a director, officer, employee or
25	agent of such transient vendor or user, has

used or is using the retail marketplace to sell or distribute items that were stolen, embezzled, or obtained by fraud, false pretenses, or other illegal means, or has engaged in or is engaging in structuring, the operator shall, not sooner than 21 days and not later than 45 days after submitting the results of the account review to the Attorney General pursuant to paragraph (1), either—

"(i) terminate the ability of the transient vendor to conduct business at the physical retail marketplace or terminate the ability of the user to conduct transactions on the online retail marketplace, and notify the Attorney General of such action; or

"(ii)(I) request that the transient vendor or user present documentary evidence that the operator reasonably determines to be clear and convincing showing that the transient vendor or user has not used the retail marketplace to sell or distribute items that were stolen, embezzled, or obtained by fraud, false pretenses, or other

1	illegal means, or has not engaged in or is
2	not engaging in structuring; and
3	"(II)(aa) if the transient vendor or
4	user fails to present such information with-
5	in 45 days of such request, terminate the
6	ability of the transient vendor to conduct
7	business at the physical retail marketplace
8	or terminate the ability of the user to con-
9	duct transactions on the online retail mar-
10	ketplace, and notify the Attorney General
11	of such action; or
12	"(bb) if the transient vendor or user
13	presents such information within 45 days,
14	then the operator shall report such infor-
15	mation to the Attorney General and notify
16	the transient vendor or user that the oper-
17	ator will not terminate the activities of the
18	transient vendor or user.
19	"(B) Attorney General Authoriza-
20	TION.—The Attorney General or a designed
21	may, with respect to the timing of the opera-
22	tor's actions pursuant to this paragraph, au-
23	thorize the operator in writing to take such ac-
24	tion prior to 21 days after submitting the re-

sults of the account review to the Attorney Gen-

1	eral or direct the operator in writing and for
2	good cause to delay such action to a date later
3	than 45 days after submitting the results of the
4	account review.
5	"(3) Documentary Evidence.—The docu-
6	mentary evidence referenced in paragraphs (1) or
7	(2)—
8	"(A) shall refer to 1 or more specific
9	items, individuals, entities or transactions alleg-
10	edly involved in theft, embezzlement, fraud,
11	false pretenses, or other illegal activity; and
12	"(B) shall be—
13	"(i) video recordings;
14	"(ii) audio recordings;
15	"(iii) sworn affidavits;
16	"(iv) financial, accounting, business,
17	or sales records;
18	"(v) records or transcripts of phone
19	conversations;
20	"(vi) documents that have been filed
21	in a Federal or State court proceeding; or
22	"(vii) signed reports to or from a law
23	enforcement agency.
24	"(4) Retention of records.—

1	"(A) RETAIL MARKETPLACES.—Each oper-
2	ator of a physical retail marketplace and each
3	operator of an online retail marketplace shall
4	maintain—
5	"(i) a record of all documentary evi-
6	dence presented to it pursuant to para-
7	graph (1) for 3 years from the date the op-
8	erator received the evidence;
9	"(ii) a record of the results of all ac-
10	count reviews conducted pursuant to para-
11	graph (1), and any supporting documenta-
12	tion, for 3 years from the date of the re-
13	view; and
14	"(iii) a copy of any suspicious activity
15	report filed with the Attorney General pur-
16	suant to this subsection, and the original
17	supporting documentation concerning any
18	report that it files, for 3 years from the
19	date of the filing.
20	"(B) Online retail marketplace.—
21	Each operator of an online retail marketplace
22	shall maintain, for 3 years after the date a user
23	becomes a high volume seller, the name, tele-
24	phone number, e-mail address, valid physical
25	postal address, and any other identification in-

formation that the operator receives about the high volume seller.

"(5) Confidentiality of Reports.—No operator of a physical retail marketplace or online retail marketplace, and no director, officer, employee or agent of such operator, may notify any individual or entity that is the subject of a suspicious activity report filed pursuant to paragraph (1), or of an account review performed pursuant to paragraph (1), of the fact that the operator filed such a report or performed such an account review, or of any information contained in the report or account review.

"(6) High volume sellers.—

"(A) Valid Postal address.—An operator of an online retail marketplace shall require each high volume seller to display a valid physical postal address whenever other information about the items or services being sold by the high volume seller is displayed on the online retail marketplace. Such valid physical postal address must be displayed in a format clearly visible to the average consumer.

"(B) Failure to provide.—In the event that a high volume seller has failed to display a valid physical postal address as required in

1	this paragraph, the operator of the online retail
2	marketplace shall—
3	"(i) within 15 days notify the user of
4	its duty to display a valid physical postal
5	address; and
6	"(ii) if 45 days after providing this
7	initial notification the user still has not
8	displayed a valid physical postal address,
9	shall—
10	"(I) terminate the ability of the
11	user to conduct transactions on mar-
12	ketplace; and
13	"(II) file within 15 days a sus-
14	picious activity report with the Attor-
15	ney General of the United States.
16	"(7) Contents of suspicious activity re-
17	PORTS.—A suspicious activity report submitted by
18	an operator to the Attorney General pursuant to
19	paragraph (1) or (6) shall contain the following in-
20	formation:
21	"(A) The name, address, telephone num-
22	ber, and e-mail address of the individual or en-
23	tity that is the subject of the report, to the ex-
24	tent known.

1	"(B) Any other information that is in the
2	possession of the operator filing the report re-
3	garding the identification of the individual or
4	entity that is the subject of the report.
5	"(C) A copy of the documentary evidence
6	and other information that led to the filing of
7	the report pursuant to paragraph (1) or (6).
8	"(D) A detailed description of the results
9	of the account review conducted pursuant to
10	paragraph (1).
11	"(E) Such other information as the Attor-
12	ney General may by regulation prescribe.
13	"(c) Voluntary Reports.—Nothing in this section
14	prevents an operator of a physical retail marketplace or
15	online retail marketplace from voluntarily reporting to a
16	Federal, State, or local government agency any suspicious
17	activity that such operator believes is relevant to the pos-
18	sible violation of any law or regulation, provided that the
19	operator also complies with the requirements of this sec-
20	tion.
21	"(d) Structuring.—No individual or entity shall
22	engage in structuring as defined in this section.
23	"(e) Enforcement by Attorney General.—
24	"(1) In general.—Any individual or entity
25	who knowingly commits a violation of, or knowingly

fails to comply with the requirements specified in, paragraph (1), (2), (4), (5), (6), or (7) of subsection (b), or subsection (d), shall be liable to the United States Government for a civil penalty of not more than \$10,000 per violation.

"(2) False statements.—

"(A) Intent to influence an operator of a physical retail marketplace or an operator of an online retail marketplace to file a suspicious activity report under subsection (b) shall be liable to the United States Government for a civil penalty of not more than \$10,000 per violation.

"(B) Suspicious activity report.—Any person who knowingly and willfully makes any material false or fictitious statement or representation in any suspicious activity report required under subsection (b) may, upon conviction thereof, be subject to liability under section 1001.

24 "(f) Enforcement by States.—

1	"(1) CIVIL ACTION.—In any case in which the
2	attorney general of a State has reason to believe
3	that an interest of the residents of that State has
4	been or is threatened or adversely affected by any
5	person or entity who has committed or is committing
6	a violation of this section, the attorney general, offi-
7	cial, or agency of the State, as parens patriae, may
8	bring a civil action on behalf of the residents of the
9	State in a district court of the United States of ap-
10	propriate jurisdiction—
11	"(A) to enjoin further violation of this sec-
12	tion by the defendant;
13	"(B) to obtain damages on behalf of the
14	residents of the State in an amount equal to
15	the actual monetary loss suffered by such resi-
16	dents; or
17	"(C) to impose civil penalties in the
18	amounts specified in subsection (e).
19	"(2) Written notice.—
20	"(A) IN GENERAL.—The State shall serve
21	prior written notice of any civil action under
22	paragraph (1) upon the Attorney General of the
23	United States, including a copy of its com-
24	plaint, except that if it is not feasible for the

State to provide such prior notice, the State

1	shall serve such notice immediately upon insti-
2	tuting such action.
3	"(B) ATTORNEY GENERAL ACTION.—Upon
4	receiving a notice respecting a civil action under
5	subparagraph (A), the Attorney General of the
6	United States shall have the right—
7	"(i) to intervene in such action;
8	"(ii) upon so intervening, to be heard
9	on all matters arising therein; and
10	"(iii) to file petitions for appeal.
11	"(3) State powers preserved.—For pur-
12	poses of bringing any civil action under this sub-
13	section, nothing in this chapter shall prevent an at-
14	torney general of a State from exercising the powers
15	conferred on the attorney general by the laws of
16	such State to conduct investigations or to administer
17	oaths or affirmations or to compel the attendance of
18	witnesses or the production of documentary and
19	other evidence.
20	"(4) Pending federal action.—Whenever a
21	civil action has been instituted by the Attorney Gen-
22	eral of the United States for violation of any rule
23	prescribed under subsection (e), no State may, dur-
24	ing the pendency of such action instituted by the At-
25	torney General of the United States, institute a civil

action under this subsection against any defendant
named in the complaint in such action for any violation alleged in such complaint.

"(5) Jurisdiction.—

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- "(A) IN GENERAL.—Any civil action brought under this subsection in a district court of the United States may be brought in the district in which the defendant is found, is an inhabitant, or transacts business or wherever venue is proper under section 1391 of title 28.
- "(B) Process.—Process in an action under this subsection may be served in any district in which the defendant is an inhabitant or in which the defendant may be found.
- "(g) No Private Right of Action.—Nothing in this section shall be interpreted to authorize a private right of action for a violation of any provision of this section, or a private right of action under any other provision of Federal or State law to enforce a violation of this section.".
- (b) CHAPTER ANALYSIS.—The chapter analysis for
 chapter 113 of title 18, United States Code, is amended
 by inserting after the item for section 2322 the following:
 "2323. Online retail marketplaces.".

1 SEC. 5. NO PREEMPTION OF STATE LAW.

- 2 No provision of this Act, including any amendment
- 3 made by this Act, shall be construed as indicating an in-
- 4 tent on the part of Congress to occupy the field in which
- 5 that provision or amendment operates, including criminal
- 6 penalties, to the exclusion of any State law on the same
- 7 subject matter that would otherwise be within the author-
- 8 ity of the State, unless there is a positive conflict between
- 9 that provision or amendment and that State law so that
- 10 the 2 cannot consistently stand together.

11 SEC. 6. EFFECTIVE DATE.

- The amendments made by this Act take effect 120
- 13 days after the date of the enactment of this Act.

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